

BOOK REVIEWS

CALIFORNIA MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

LICIT AND ILLICIT DRUGS—The Consumers Union Report on Narcotics, Stimulants, Depressants, Inhalants, Hallucinogens, and Marijuana—including Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol—Edward M. Brecher and the Editors of *Consumer Reports*. Little, Brown and Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. (02106), 1972. 623 pages, \$3.95 (Paperback).

How would you like to review a book that is two years old; one that you have read on several occasions and which is now sent to you for review after you have recommended it to several students? Such is my task! It's usually a pleasant experience to review a book for a medical journal. The book is often brand new, destined to be a best seller and gives red hot new information. *Licit and Illicit Drugs* is a paperback costing \$3.95 which was first published in 1972 but was written in the late 60's. It is clearly a valuable asset to those people interested in the field of drug abuse and alcoholism.

The Consumers Union has been a valuable group evaluating many consumer issues for the average person. In 1963 Consumers Union evaluated *Smoking and the Public Interest* which was very successful. In the late 1960's Edward Brecher, one of the initial participants in Consumers Union's draft on smoking began a study on drug abuse. Mr. Brecher and the editors of *Consumer Reports* spent several years obtaining historical, social, pharmacological, medical and judicial perspectives on the problem of drug abuse and alcoholism. In an inexpensive and easy to read format they prepared a series of facts and opinions concerning legal and illegal drugs. The information on the individual drugs was circulated among forty experts before publication.

This important work stresses the historical and social perspectives on the drugs of abuse as well as the current laws, attitudes, and policies concerning all the commonly used and abused drugs. Their review ended in 1971 and Consumers Union promises to have a continuing update in the pages of *Consumer Reports*. I think most of the data are fairly presented and although some of the attitudes may seem radical, I think they are basically sound. I'm especially impressed with the conclusions concerning the failure of the judicial and penal systems and the skepticism concerning easy solution to these complicated problems. I am also impressed that both sides of many controversial issues are presented. There are an adequate bibliography and index which make the text even more useful.

Clearly the most controversial aspect of the text involves the six major recommendations concerning drug abuse as a whole and the alternatives for dealing with the problems. It would take many pages to discuss the controversies surrounding these proposals, but for anyone interested in the field they make interesting reading. The report is sensible, easy to read, and useful. I recommend the purchase of this text as a format for discussion of these critical issues. If you read it with an open mind you'll clearly enjoy it. It would even make easy reading for parents and teenagers who need a focus for discussion. Try it, you'll like it!

CHARLES E. BECKER, MD

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Becker was asked to review this book at this late date in response to a suggestion from a reader who called it to our attention.

DERMAL PATHOLOGY—Edited by James H. Graham, M.D., Professor of Medicine (Dermatology), Department of Medicine, Chairman, Division of Dermatology, Professor of Pathology, Department of Pathology, Director, Section of Dermal Pathology, University of California, Irvine; Head, Section of Dermatology, Orange County Medical Center, Orange, California; Wayne C. Johnson, M.D., Professor of Dermatology, Associate Professor of Pathology, Temple University School of Medicine; Director of Dermal Pathology Laboratory, Skin and Cancer Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia; and Elson B. Helwig, M.D., Chief, Department of Pathology and Branch of Dermal and Gastrointestinal Pathology, Washington, D.C.; Visiting Professor of Pathology in Dermatology, Temple University Health Sciences Center, Philadelphia; Clinical Professor of Pathology (Dermal), George Washington University School of Medicine, Washington, D.C. Harper & Row, Publishers, Medical Department, 2350 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown, Md. (21740), 1972. 840 pages, 1,155 illustrations, \$45.00.

For years the annual post graduate courses in Dermal Pathology held in Philadelphia and elsewhere have been the format of clarifying and expanding knowledge of modern concepts of skin pathology for use by both dermatologists and pathologists. These courses by Graham et al have provided the basis of this textbook supplemented by expansion on many topics and by recent studies by individual authors.

The illustrations are plentiful and are magnificent. The four chapters on histochemistry of the skin, techniques for preparation of skin for histopathologic study and cytodagnosis of various diseases and tumors exemplify the advanced nature of this text. The remaining thirty-one chapters include basic anatomy, ultrastructure biopsy and gross tissue techniques, basic pathologic changes in skin and their histopathologic features of a large number of cutaneous disorders with emphasis on differential diagnosis both microscopically and clinically. Seven chapters have been authored or co-authored by Elson Helwig and many articles and photographic material credited to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology are presented.

The classification and illustration of bullous dermatoses are presented in the clearest fashion of any text available. The authors are especially excellent in their discussion of the areas of commonly confused diagnoses such as the premalignant diseases, malignant lymphomas and reactive lymphoid hyperplasia, and palisading and other granulomas. In the lengthy sections on superficial fungus infections there is presented both clinical and histologic material on the wide spectrum of too often overlooked histologic features.

There are several histopathology tests available currently. Pinkus and Mehregan in their *Guide to Dermatohistopathology* provide a clear simple explanation of basic classification and principles. Lever in his *Histopathology of the Skin* attempts to concisely explain clinical and histologic features of every disease. Whereas Graham et al, while not including all cutaneous disorders, offer the clearest explanation of advanced knowledge in all difficult areas of cutaneous pathology in addition to fundamental concepts. This book deserves room on the library shelf of every dermatologist, pathologist, dermatopathologist and resident physicians interested in diagnosis of skin lesions.

LEO INDIANER, MD